Fishermen languishing with Pakistan authorities

2911. SHRI JAYANTI LAL BAROT:
SHRI SURENDRA MOTILAL PATEL:

Will the PRIME MINISTER be pleased to state:

(a) whether the State Government of Gujarat and MPs of Gujarat State have represented to take up issue of release of fishermen languishing with Pakistan authorities;

(b) if so, the step taken in this regard and the response of Government of Pakistan; and

(c) the number of fishermen and boats that are still under the custody of Pakistan (*i.e.* PMSA) particularly belonging to Gujarat State?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF EXTERNAL AFFAIRS (SHRI E. AHAMMED): (a) Yes. The Government of Gujarat and MPs belonging to Gujarat State have written to the Union Government to take up issue of release of fishermen with Pakistani authorities. 19 Honourable Members of Parliament from Gujarat gave a representation to the Prime Minister on this issue on 6th March 2006. The Chief Minister of Gujarat wrote a letter to Prime Minister on 7th March 2006 on this issue.

(b) Government has raised the issue of fishermen regularly with Pakistan, most recently at the Home Secretary level talks on May 30-31, 2006 in Islamabad. In these talks, the two countries reached an understanding under which both sides agreed to expedite release of fishermen and civilian prisoners and complete necessary formalities like grant of consular access and confirmation of national status in the earliest possible time. Pakistan gave consular access to 313 fishermen on January 30-31, 2006 and 192 fishermen on July 25-26, 2006. It has released 93 fishermen in 2006. Two minor fishermen were released on May 27, 71 fishermen on May 30 and 20 fishermen on June 30, 2006.

(c) A total number of 412 fishermen and 287 fishing boats are at present in Pakistan's custody, out of which 284 fishermen and 286 boats belong to Gujarat.

Release of fishermen of Gujarat

2912. SHRI SURENDRA MOTILAL PATEL:
SHRI SURYAKANTBHAI ACHARYA:

Will the PRIME MINISTER be pleased to state:

(a) whether a delegation of Gujarat MPs called on Prime Minister in